

820004-1828

NO. 855

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
Berlin, Germany, March 18, 1936.

SUBJECT: Dr. Hermann F. Erben M. D.

Division of
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
APR 11 1936

CONFIDENTIAL

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's confidential instruction - For Staff Use Only - dated December 28, 1935. (File No. 130- Erben, Hermann Frederick), and to report that Mr. Erben called at this Consulate General to-day.

He presented the expired American passport No. 248504 issued at Washington on December 7, 1935, valid for only three months. This passport contains a French Transit Visa, which was used in December 1935, a German visa issued by the German Legation in Vienna on January 27, 1936, which was never used, and an Austrian visa issued by the Border Control Office at Feldkirch, Austria, which was used to effect entrance into Austria on December 23, 1935, and exit therefrom in March 1936. There are also notations that he obtained 175 travelers marks on March 16, 1936, at the Deutsche Bank und Disconto-Gesellschaft, and that he had registered funds with the Austrian exchange control on December 23, 1935.

Mr. Erben told a disconnected and confused story about having applied for an extension of this passport

while

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- 2 -

while he was in Vienna a month or two ago requesting the Department to send its reply to this office. It eventually developed that he had not formally applied for a passport extension on the prescribed forms through the Consulate General in Vienna, but claims to have merely written a letter directly to the Department of State.

He was informed that the German police require foreigners in this country to have valid travel documents and that the expired American passport contained no frontier stamps showing entry into Germany. He admitted that he had entered Germany after his limited German visa had expired on March 7, 1936, when his passport expired.

He was advised to apply for extension which would be submitted to Washington for consideration. He claimed, however, that he would be returning to the United States in a week or two if he could obtain a job on an American ship in Hamburg. Failing that, he said he would buy his passage home by the Black Diamond Line from Antwerp. He says that his funds are nearly exhausted and that he is anxious to return to the United States to retain his American citizenship; over which he claims to have experienced considerable difficulties due to his extensive travels and prolonged foreign residences and suspicions associating him with the narcotic traffic.

Then, at long last, he presented an authenticated

passport issued December 5, 1935, copy of which is

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enclosed.

enclosed, stating that he always used this in connection with his passport. The photo with the beard in the lower left hand corner is the same as the one on his passport; but Mr. Erben is now smooth shaven. The photo in the upper right hand corner, smooth shaven, in the uniform of a ship's doctor (?) was apparently taken some years ago and probably was added to this document recently.

The notations stamped on this document show that he obtained a German transit visa at the German Legation in Vienna on March 6, 1936, for a two weeks' transit trip in Germany; that he entered Germany with his travel document on March 15, 1936, and that he declared his foreign money. Since he is using this document in Germany his expired passport has been taken up and at his request will be forwarded to the Department. He stated that he had promised Mrs. Shipley to give up this passport in three months, so was taking this first opportunity of doing so through this Consulate General. It is not known whether he will eventually make a formal application for the extension of this passport as he seemed loath to do so this morning. Furthermore, his affidavit is authenticated with the large red seal of the Department of Justice and is not limited to a short period, so it is believed that he will usually find this document much more useful for his purposes than a limited or expired passport. Since he entered Germany on that document, he has retained it for his return to the United States which he reiterates is going to be in the

DISPATCH IMMEDIATE

immediate future.

Mr. Erben states that since he is a ship's doctor he will probably be going in and out of the United States a great deal, so may want to have his American passport extended eventually --- especially since he is "interested in going to Abyssinia if there is still anything doing there".

Mr. Erben stated that he has been definitely expelled from Austria because the authorities there think he has a bad reputation. He attributes this to warnings sent abroad by the American narcotic authorities and likewise attributes his difficulties in India to similar suspicions which he claims are unfounded.

Respectfully yours,

Douglas Jenkins
Douglas Jenkins
Consul General

Enclosure:
Copy of authenticated affidavit.

Copies to Consulates at Hamburg, Antwerp, Vienna.

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Received *ET*

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F820004-1832

NO. 527

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,

Berlin, Germany, April 9, 1936.

SUBJECT: Passport of Hermann Erben.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,

WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to my despatch No. 255 dated March 18, 1936, and to enclose the limited American passport No. 248504 issued at Washington on December 7, 1935, to Hermann F. Erben.

Mr. Erben, who is still in Berlin, has informed this office that he is definitely returning to the United States on the SS "Black Falcon" sailing from Antwerp on April 18th or, if he can work his way home, on a ship sailing from Hamburg before that date.

As previously reported Mr. Erben is using another travel document in Germany and persists in not making a formal application for the extension of this limited passport.

FILED
APR 11 1936

Respectfully yours,

George F. Jenkins
George F. Jenkins
Consul General

Enclosure:

American passport No. 248504

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Copies to Antwerp and Hamburg.

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APR 23 1936
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

1936 APR 23 PM 3 01

130- ERBEN, HERMANN FREDERICK

F820 004 - 1833

April 27 1936

In reply refer to
FE 130 Erben, Hermann Frederick

CONFIDENTIAL

Attention: Bureau of Narcotics

The Secretary of State presents his compliments to the Honorable the Secretary of the Treasury, and, with reference to previous correspondence, encloses herewith, in duplicate, for the confidential information of the Commissioner of Narcotics, a copy of despatch No. 894, dated April 9, 1936, from the American Consulate General at Berlin, in regard to Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben, No. 249 on the Confidential List of persons suspected of being engaged in the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.

Enclosure:

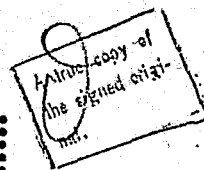
From Consulate General, Berlin,
No. 894, April 9, 1936, in
duplicate.

APR 27 1936

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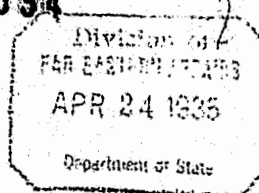
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DISCUSSION

Hes

F820 004-1834



J. W. 130 Erlam Hermann J.

Re: Dr. Hermann F. ERLEN.

Paris, April 18, 1935.

Memorandum for Division of Foreign Control.

It is learned from the German Correspondent that Dr. Hermann F. ERLEN, (C/L. N° 249) has been residing in Berlin of late and has been kept under surveillance. He carries a certificate of Naturalization and Seaman's Protection Certificate N° 5290, dated July 5, 1934, Service Record N° 81610. He has been endeavoring to obtain visas at the American Consulate General and the Persian Legation. It is his intention to leave shortly on an expedition to the Far East. His visiting card reads "Physician & Surgeon to the Austro-American Trans-Asia-Expedition, San Francisco, Cal."

ERLEN was questioned by the police without being informed of the reason, and his statements were found to be substantially correct. No indication of a connection with the drug traffic could be found. ERLEN was shabbily dressed and appears to have lost much weight. He hopes to make money on the expedition as the representative of a firm which manufactures a cure for malaria. His wife and two sons will not accompany him, but remain in Berlin.

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No. 1696

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

VIENNA, AUSTRIA, APRIL 19, 1935.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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DIVISION OF
COMMUNICATIONS
& RECORDS

SUBJECT: CITIZENSHIP OF HERMAN FREDERICK ERBEN.

RECEIVED
STATE
MAY 11 1935

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THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON.

Division of
FAR EASTERN AFFAIRS
MAY 11 1935
Department of State

noted in 80
5-10-35
P. 111

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I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of the Department's instruction of March 27, 1935, concerning the case of Herman Frederick Erben. The Department states that it does not feel warranted in issuing a passport to Mr. Erben except for his immediate return to the United States and upon surrender of his present seaman's identity certificate and that it is interested in obtaining information regarding his plans for returning to the United States.

Mr. Erben appeared at this office on April 17, 1935, and inquired whether a reply had been received from the Department on his case and whether this office would now issue him a service passport to enable him to proceed through Asia on the expedition in which he is interested. He was told that this could not be done whereupon he said that he intends to start out on the expedition anyway using his seaman's identity certificate as a passport. The expedition consists of Mr. Erben, Mr. Max Reisch, an Austrian subject, well and favorably recommended to the Consulate General by the Austrian Foreign Office, and Mr.

Helmuth

Helmuth Hahmann, also an Austrian subject. The two Austrians have applied for and received at this office visitors' visas for entrance into the United States. The expedition which is called by its participants "The Austro-American Trans-Asia Expedition" is apparently being sponsored by the Austrian Touring Club and is to make use of an automobile donated by an Austrian automobile factory. It is believed, that a good portion of the capital has been put up by Mr. Erben himself. He stated at this office that he had contributed five hundred dollars. The expedition is to leave Vienna on April 20th for Trieste where it is to take ship for Beirut. From Beirut it is to proceed over land to Damascus, Baghdad, Teheran, Kabul, Calcutta, Rangoon, Saigon, Amoy, Shanghai, Peiping; it is then scheduled to proceed to the United States via Kobe, Yokohama, Honolulu, and San Francisco. It is believed that Dr. Erben expects to apply for a service passport under the provisions of Rule (g) when he arrives in China.

Dr. Erben stated at this Consulate General that he hopes to make money during the course of this journey by representing certain German drug manufacturing concerns. Information has been received here from the American Consul in Trieste that a parcel of drugs and medicines from a German firm is being held by the customs office there for Mr. Erben. It is thought that this fact might be of interest to the Department in view of Mr. Erben's being included in the Bureau of Narcotics Confidential List of Suspects.

Respectfully yours,

George F. Kennan
George F. Kennan
American Consul

File No. 130.8

GFK/ow

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F820004-1837

NO. 65

AMERICAN CONSULATE

Trieste, Italy, April 23, 1935.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SUBJECT: Citizenship Status of Dr. Hermann F. Erben.

THE HONORABLE

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

SIR:

I have the honor to refer to the Department's confidential instruction of September 24, 1934 (file 130) to the American Consulate General at Vienna, also a subsequent instruction of unknown date to the same office, regarding the citizenship status of Dr. Hermann Frederick Erben, who is No. 249 on the Bureau of Narcotics Confidential List of suspects dated July 1, 1933. The Department is advised that Dr. Erben arrived at Trieste from Vienna yesterday, and is leaving on April 24, 1935 for Haifa on the s/s "GALILEA", in company of two young Austrians, the three comprising the so-called "Austro-American Transasiatic Expedition". He plans to pursue research work in connection with tropical diseases for about a four months period in Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan, and declares his intention of leaving for the United States as soon as his work is finished, probably via Calcutta or Rangoon. I have accordingly

- circularized -

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circularized our Consulates at Jerusalem, Beirut, Baghdad, Teheran, Bombay, Calcutta and Rangoon.

I may add that a few days prior to Dr. Erben's arrival at Trieste, this office was notified by the local Customs that two packages had been received from German sources for him, addressed in the care of this Consulate. One contained optical goods, the other, about six pounds of "Malarcan", a new anti-malaria specific in tablet form. In view of advices received from our Consulate General at Vienna regarding Dr. Erben's previous connection with narcotic smuggling, the despatch of so large an amount of this drug appeared somewhat suspicious. By a private arrangement with the Customs, half a dozen tubes were abstracted from the container and samples of their contents submitted to analysis locally. No trace of a narcotic drug was discovered and the material is to be handed over by the Customs to Dr. Erben when he boards his vessel tomorrow.

The consignment consisted of at least 110 tubes each containing about a dozen tablets and it is not impossible, if it really represented an attempt to smuggle, that only a certain percentage of the "Malarcan" was replaced by a narcotic substitute, lessening the danger of discovery. In the impossibility of making a more extended analysis, this must remain a matter of conjecture, and is only being reported to the Department as of general interest.

Respectfully yours,

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PG:JF
Bernard Gottlieb
American Consul.